THE DIFFERENCE CHRIST IS MAKING

THE DIFFERENCE CHRIST IS MAKING

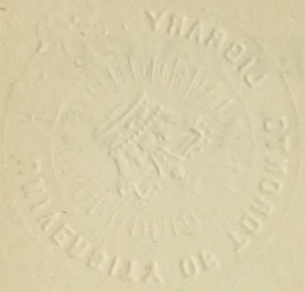
BY

SIR W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, LL.D.

REPRINTED FROM *THE BRITISH WEEKLY*

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO



CONTENTS

I.

"THEY."

(*Published June 4th*, 1914.)

"MAKE to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The implications of the everlasting words of Christ are infinitely deeper and more significant than we have hitherto reckoned them. It may be that their meaning has not yet reached our minds, and that they have to be interpreted through long, painful, and startling experiences of the future. The words we have quoted carry condemnation and the promise of reversal. Wealth, whether we like it or no, is frankly described by Christ as the mammon of unrighteousness. We cannot escape His meaning by drawing

a distinction between wealth justly acquired and wealth acquired by fraud. What He means is that wealth in itself is evil—in certain circumstances, at least. The man who is rich in the midst of bitter and hungry poverty is sinning against righteousness. He may not be aware of his crime, and he may win forgiveness for it by kindness. If he will treat generously the need around him he may secure the eternal future. To Christ, whose field of vision embraces the two worlds, it was plain that an undreamt-of reversal was at hand. Those who own the unrighteous mammon must pass away and leave it. When they did they might be received into Paradise by the poor to whom they had opened heart and hand. But these poor—where were they? They were the warders of the doors that do last for aye! This flash of light is thrown by Christ on the darkness of the future, and still He is challenging the Church

and the world with the problem of the poor. "They" are with us still, and the unrighteous mammon is in other hands than theirs.

I.

We make this the starting-point for some articles on "The Difference Christ is Making." That brilliant expositor of Isaiah, Dr. George Adam Smith, has a chapter on "The Difference Christ has Made." He uses it only in connection with the sick bed of Hezekiah, and shows that Hezekiah's faith and fortitude are profitable only for this life. It is when we begin to think, What of the life to come? that we perceive the infinite difference Christ has made. Hezekiah received a prolongation of life, but in the end he believed that death must win the last throw. Fifteen years would soon pass, and then the darkness. He had to make the best of a short reprieve. In the New Testa-

ment the curtain is lifted, and we see those who have come out of the great tribulation and walk softly through the unending years before the throne of God.

But the difference Christ has made, though we see not yet all things put under Him, extends to the whole field of life and action. So great is the difference He has made that some would base the argument for the truth of Christianity on the influence which Christ has exercised upon the moral and social condition of mankind. They call the results from that influence miraculous because they rise above the effects that could be produced by the teaching or the character of mere men. They must be accounted for by divine agency. They can be verified by all who study history and contemplate with open eyes the fact of existence. We would not deny the force of the argument. To the great and simple

intellect of Walter Scott, and many others, the effects of Christianity on slavery and polygamy were sufficient proofs of its divine origin. But we would ask for further scope, and reason not only from the difference Christ has made, but from the difference He is making, and is still to make. His Spirit, be sure, is astir in the world. That Holy Spirit is at work in many places where it is neither recognised nor named, though we are far enough distant from the day when the seven graces of the Sevenfold Spirit are shed abroad through space and time.

We need this reinforcement of the argument, for, as one of our ablest apologists has pointed out, there is much that might be said in reply to the contention that the fruits of Christ in this world already authenticate His Divine mission. Dr. Bruce admits very heartily that the excellence of the Christian religion is demonstrable from

history. But he points out that there is need of careful discrimination between improvements in the condition of the world which are the direct consequences of Christianity, and those which merely came into existence subsequently to the commencement of the Christian era.

It has also to be remembered that the argument is complicated by the serious differences of opinion among Christians. To the Roman Catholic his Church "is the one great effect of Christ's appearing, the proof of His divinity, the perpetuation of His Incarnation; a perennial miracle possessing indefeasibly and exercising daily all manner of miraculous gifts." To a large school of Protestants the Church of Rome is the devil's caricature of Christianity. It is the mystery of iniquity. It is the great trial of faith. In no sense is it to be counted a Church of Christ, and it would be better for mankind to possess no religion than to

be possessed by that. It is possible, we hope, to ascend above these contentions and gain a truer and larger view, but meanwhile many find this impossible.

II.

It is also keenly urged, alike by friend and foe, that the Church of Christ has failed and is failing to give a lead in the cause of social justice. One of the most Christian of Socialist writers asks how we can explain the history of the Church, her undemocratic sympathies, her truckling to conventionality, and her deep prejudice in favour of things as they are? To this we can only reply that there is an advance, however tardy. Lord Eldon's "buttress" theory of Christianity is, we may hope, finally abandoned. The day when Christianity was regarded as the best defence of property and privilege, the surest way of tranquillising and disarming the poor

in the assertion of their just rights, will never come again. Year by year the ardour for justice becomes more intense, and we may hope that the new generation of preachers and Christian leaders will take the Christian Church far on the road to righteousness.

As to the objection that so much of what has been won is due to the efforts of those who are not Christians, we doubt whether it fully applies to this country, at least. It seems idle in the present day for any man to separate himself from Christianity and say, "Though I am not a Christian, I think so-and-so." In fact, he is a Christian in many respects, and he cannot cease to be one, however much he may wish it. He might just as well try to cease to be a Briton. The Spirit of Christ is to be found in strange places, and cannot be restricted to areas defined by strict lines of creed. Nevertheless, it must be owned that after two thousand years the

Christian Church is very far from the comprehension and the faithful following of her Master.

We read in a Conservative journal —the *Glasgow Evening News*—a paper on the slums of Scotland and Glasgow. The writer quotes from Sir George M'Crae, who says: "After careful study and personal examination, I do not hesitate to say that the condition of housing in Scotland is a standing disgrace to the nation. I find, not only in the big towns, but in the smaller towns, a great scarcity of houses and a lamentable state of congestion, misery, and wretchedness. Nothing short of a revolution will put Scotland in the position it ought to occupy." The writer endorses these words, and says that in one vital particular at least civilisation has been suspended for a generation in the lower valley of the Clyde, and from Glasgow to Greenock there are more slums than ever.

III.

What we maintain is that Christ is making a difference, and we may try to show how even comparatively recent Christian utterances have become practically impossible in the present day. Perhaps the ablest book of sermons that has been published for a generation is that by Canon Mozley. It is full of strong, high, courageous, and original thought. Yet we do not think that any Christian preacher would write nowadays as Canon Mozley did about such questions as the social order and the relation of Christianity to war. We are certain that when the comparison is made between older utterances and those of the present day the difference Christ has made is beyond denial.

Let us take, for example, the eighteenth century. It was apparently a contented century. People took their

lot easily, and declined to trouble themselves with great schemes. They accepted things as they were. They lived friendly, social, and easy lives. They saw, as a rule, only what they wanted to see. They took their power as a matter of course, and never dreamt that the order into which they fitted so well could be altered. And yet every real student of the period knows that the condition of the poor was appalling. The want of work, the scarcity of provisions, the horrors of workhouses, the swarms of vagrants were notorious and undeniable. They provoked the rich sometimes to the cruelty and wrath which come from fear. Pity and kindness were to be found, but the prevailing mood even in such a gentle writer as Goldsmith was stern. The anger against the early Methodists was largely provoked by their sympathy with the poorest classes. Their critics wrote about the poor in a tone of

loathing and contempt which would be impossible now. Everyone knows the letter of the Duchess of Buckingham to Selina, Countess of Huntingdon on the impertinence of Methodism and its outrage on good breeding in reducing all ranks to the common level of sinners. "It is monstrous to be told," says her Grace, "that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl the earth." When the Prince of Wales inquired why he had not seen Lady Huntingdon lately at his Court, he was answered: "She is praying with the beggars." These utterances were not exceptions, but represented the general feeling. The vagrant classes were regarded as creatures that crawl on the earth, as vermin that must be hunted down.

It was seriously proposed that in certain circumstances the poor should be made slaves. In a sermon on the text "Be ye therefore merciful" we

find a passage quoted with approval by a reviewer "as a specimen of the forcible manner in which our author frequently expresses himself." It begins with these words: "Here there is one caution to be laid down which is of the last consequence to be carefully attended to, and that is that the vagrant beggar is an eternal exception to all the precepts and dictates of Christian charity. The race of vagrant beggars is the vilest race that ever cursed the earth." Here and there, but very rarely, a voice of protest and compassion was raised against the oppression. The miserable condition of the poor "in this free and opulent kingdom has long been a disgrace to our police. While some vile imposters have abused charity, other wretched objects of less invention or more honesty have suffered all the extremities of indigence and distress, often aggravated by the inhumanity of parish

officers. To see our fellow-creatures hunted from parish to parish like noxious animals for no other crime than beggary must fill every compassionate breast with the deepest concern." But such voices were rare and low.

IV.

The old order passes, though it passes very slowly. The passion for wealth was never more fierce. In a recent American novel, "The Way Home," the hero says to his betrothed: "Let me tell you once for all, that there never was a time when money, and the instinct for making it, weren't the first things in my thoughts. As far as my memory goes back I can see myself fighting against the fact of being poor. When I decided to strike out into the world for myself—and make money if I could—I didn't fall away from any imaginary call to higher things. I assure you I didn't. I gave up the

unreal for the real; and if ever I was true to myself, as you put it, it was then. . . . I wanted to be respected. I wanted to be free. No poor man is ever respected. The saint and the sinner despise him alike. The Christian and the heathen despise him. The priest and the bishop despise him. You despise him yourself. No, no; you needn't protest. You despised *me*—till I did the things you disapprove of, and made money. As a matter of fact, you'd never have admitted me to the equality with yourself I'm enjoying at this minute if I hadn't done it. Would you now?" But there are fewer every day who would say such things frankly, though so many think them. And Christ is slowly changing even the minds of those who think them. We see not yet the forms, the proportion, the array of the new order that is to follow. Even that order will give place in its turn to another, and changes will be repeated

through the weary generations of men till Christ comes to His own at last, till the eternal day break, the one day known to the Lord where at evening time it shall be light. But through all we shall be moving nearer and nearer to the mind of Christ.

II.

PROPERTY.

(*Published June 11th*, 1914.)

One of the most important books that has been published for a long period is "Property: Its Duties and Rights; Historically, Philosophically and Religiously Regarded. Essays by Various Writers, with an introduction by the Bishop of Oxford" (Macmillan, 5s. net). We are proud to have had a very small share in the production of a book which may well be epoch-making. Bishop Gore explains, in his admirable and refreshing introduction, the origin of the volume. Dr. Bartlet, of Mansfield College, had written a letter to *The British Weekly* strongly urging upon Christians the duty of reconsidering their ideas about Property in the light

of the Bible doctrine of stewardship. He sent his letter to the Bishop, and suggested that they might combine to issue some literature of a popular kind upon the duties and rights of Property based on this Biblical doctrine. The Bishop had felt that it was necessary to go back to an ideal of Property, a principal of Property such as would tend to form a corporate conscience. Without a clear principle no corporate mind and conscience could be formed. It was resolved accordingly that the subject should be treated both from the standards of philosophy and religion, and the names of willing writers were finally forthcoming. We have here seven papers, all on a very high level of ability, learning, and candour. Professor Hobhouse deals with "The Historical Evolution of Property, in Fact and in Idea," Dr. Rashdall with "The Philosophical Theory of Property," Mr. A. D. Lindsay with "The

Principle of Private Property," Dr. Bartlet with "The Biblical and Early Christian Idea of Property," Dr. Carlyle with "The Theory of Property in Mediæval Theology," Mr. H. G. Wood with "The Influence of the Reformation on Ideas concerning Wealth and Property." The concluding essay, by Dr. Scott Holland, is a most trenchant and simply-worded discussion on the relation between "Property and Personality." It is one of the many merits of the book that it is often tentative and suggestive. It should be so in the light of the difficulties. No one can yet see clearly to the ultimate solutions. One criticism we are inclined to make is that a larger space might have been properly devoted to the Biblical idea of Property. Dr. Bartlet treats with a master hand the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the early Christian ideas of Property. This might well have made three essays. Dr. Bartlet has been

compelled to leave out much that is pertinent to his argument. In particular, it should always be remembered that the whole subject passed into a new phase when the Everlasting Word appeared in the world of time.

I.

Perhaps the greatest and most influential Christian teacher of the last generation was Dr. R. W. Dale. Dr. Dale was deeply interested in social problems, and approached them in the spirit of a reformer. We may safely say that few men of his time were more enlightened. We may profitably therefore recall his disquisition on the rights of Property, in his noble and manly book on "The Ten Commandments." For what we are considering is not merely the difference that Christ is making in the world, but also the difference He is making in His own Church. Dr. Dale's sermon on the words, "Thou

shalt not steal," contains, it is needless to say, much that is excellent, but the general drift is to vindicate the rights of Property in the sturdiest fashion. After acknowledging that the sufferings and crimes incidental to the institution of Property are so grave as sometimes to provoke the inquiry whether the institution itself can be defended, Dr. Dale turns to the unequal distribution of wealth. He points out that while one man has a mansion for his home and surrounds it with a park of 500 acres, there are a few miles off a hundred thousand people living in narrow streets and dismal courts, and in houses so small and mean that wealth, comfort, and decency are almost destroyed. Is the remedy to be found in a fair distribution of all the wealth of the nation among its inhabitants? This, says Dr. Dale, is the kind of remedy "which suggests itself to men when they are very young, very ignorant, very enthusiastic, or very

miserable." He refers to more moderate schemes of communism and declines to discuss them. "They are not raised by this Commandment, which simply recognises and protects the rights of Property in whatever form they may exist among any particular people."

Dr. Dale argues that the institution of Property is essential to the cultivation and development of the nature of man. Excessive physical labour is a great evil, but the evils of indolence are still greater. No less necessary is the institution of Property for the intellectual development of man. "Painters, sculptors, musicians, surgeons, physicians, architects, journalists, authors are all induced to qualify themselves for their professions, and to work at them because the existence of the rights of Property require that if they are to live they are to work." Further, "No Acts of Parliament or courts of justice, nor the opinion of society, can determine

for a Christian man how Property is to be acquired, or how it is to be employed. He is under a higher law."

The rights of Property may be outraged, and if they are, the sinner will be punished "by a more august tribunal than administers the laws of nations, and with sterner penalties than those laws can inflict." But Property is a divine institution founded on a divine idea, and protected by divine sanctions. The rights of Property were never intended to carry the moral right to refuse assistance to the miserable and the destitute. "It is one of their incidental moral advantages that they render it possible to manifest in a thousand beautiful and gracious forms the spirit of Charity; if an inferior law did not secure to me the absolute control of the material wealth which I have created or have been fortunate enough to inherit, I should be unable to show my allegiance to that higher law which

requires me voluntarily to relieve the sufferings of other men." The sermon is closed by a brief statement on the "obligations of Charity." It is necessary to redeem and to protect a definite portion of our property for the service of God and the poor. This lecture was delivered in 1870, and we may safely say that it represented the view held almost universally by Christian teachers of that time. We have travelled very far since then.

II.

How far we have travelled is indicated in the volume which Bishop Gore has edited. In future articles we shall have occasion to refer in detail to some of those essays. At present we must content ourselves with a brief summary, and Dr. Gore has done that work so admirably that we cannot hope to improve it. He points out that the individual, however deeply stirred in his

conscience, can do very little by himself, for he is in the bonds of an organised system of Property. The system indeed has altered and is altering, and will be altered further. But at every stage it holds the individual in its grasp. What we need is ideas. Unless legislation springs from true and powerful ideas it is bound to fail. Christians must come to a common mind about Property, and cease to grope in the dark. Most important and fruitful is the distinction between Property "for use" and Property "for power." Since Aristotle all thinkers have recognised that private property is necessary for the free development of the higher life in the individual, and is the most effective stimulus to character and personal exertion. We all need a sphere of our own to stimulate us to development, to the realisation of our capacities. But Aristotle thought of this self-realisation as the privilege of freemen or citizens.

The mass of the people were to be slaves. They existed not for themselves, but for their masters. We cannot away with this distinction. We know that whatever inequalities may prove irreducible, every man has the divine and equal right to realise himself. A civilisation is successful in proportion as it makes all its members to feel that they have a chance of making the best of themselves. Can this be said of things as they are? Not much Property is wanted "for use," for true freedom. When it goes beyond that it becomes Property "for power." This ends in the almost unmeasured control of the few. Our people as a whole cannot, within reasonable limits, control their own destiny. Their opportunity to live and work and eat is subject to the will of others. They are "hands." Dr. Gore says that "the conviction rises in our mind as we contemplate the facts that something has gone very wrong with our tenure of

Property; that we need, by peaceful means, and, if it may be, by general consent, to accomplish such a redistribution of Property as shall reduce the inordinate amount of "Property for power" in the hands of the few, and give to all men, as far as may be, in reasonable measure "Property for use."

But does not this ambition violate the sacred right of Property? Dr. Rashdall says that there is no absolute right of Property. Its justification must depend upon no *a priori* principle, but upon its social effects. A man has a divine right to realise his being, and this involves a certain right of Property. Moreover, from the first, a man is a member of the State. It is the business of the State to give all its citizens a chance of being happy and progressive, of bestowing a life that is worth living. "If at any stage it finds that the institution of Property, as it exists, is

fostering luxury and exaggerated power in a few, and enslaving or hindering the many, there is nothing to prevent it rectifying what is amiss." That is, the State is free to alter its laws or its methods so as to secure the better distribution of Property, to further the real welfare of all its citizens. It does not follow that the State is infallible. It is possible for the State to blunder and to do injustice. All that can be said is that though the direction of human life individually or socially is difficult, the attempt to do so must be continued.

III.

What has the Christian religion to say to the institution of Property? Dr. Bartlet expounds with great power the teaching of the law and the prophets. Alike in the institutions of the law and in the teaching of the prophets Property is regarded as having God's sanction,

but restrained by a primary insistence on the right of God, the only absolute owner, and the rights of our fellow-men, especially the weaker and poorer members of the State. "Much," says Dr. Gore, "that we are accustomed to hear called legitimate insistence upon the rights of Property the Old Testament would seem to call the robbery of God, and the grinding of the faces of the poor."

We come to the teaching of our Lord, and we cannot feel that the subject is adequately dealt with. Very few writers on Christology recognise how much of our Lord's teaching is about the use of money. It would hardly be an exaggeration if we said that there is no subject that seems to have haunted His mind more continually. Dr. Gore says well that the idea and institution of the Christian Church carried with it a doctrine of Property which echoed our Lord's "strong disparagement of

wealth," and was in theory and practice highly communal. The sense of brotherhood was made practically effective in this way, and produced an economic condition in the Christian community which was one main cause in its progress. Dr. Bartlet takes us through the Fathers, and shows that they used the strongest language against any "rights of property" which resist the claim of the needs of the brethren. Lord Hugh Cecil has recently said that "originally the relief of the poor was based on the duty of Christian charity, and not on any supposed right of justice." This is not true as far as early Christianity is concerned. To withhold charity is to refuse justice. Later on, when the whole fabric of society was in Christian hands, charity in the form of tithe and the distribution of wealth to need was still asserted to be justice. "No man has really the right to hold for himself more than he needs." St.

Thomas maintained that even stealing is no stealing if the need is sufficiently urgent.

Mr. H. G. Wood, in a strikingly able paper, shows that the doctrine of the Reformation was substantially that of Dr. Dale. There was much that is wise and kind and admirable in the teaching of such men as Baxter, but Puritanism on the whole adhered to the principle of *laissez faire*. The disposal of Property was primarily a question between the individual and God. The existing social organisation was to be maintained and the new Jerusalem postponed to another world.

IV.

Dr. Gore concludes with a decisive statement of his own views. He holds that there is no legitimate claim that Property can now make against the alteration of conditions by gradual and peaceable means. He would maintain

the right of Property for use, but, as things are, individualism in property is working disastrous havoc. The cry for justice from masses of men and women is a cry which is legitimate. Christians ought, as free men, to face the facts, and gird themselves willingly for reform, even if it entails for them, as it will, personal sacrifice. Harnack says that in the economic struggle the Church has generally been upon the wrong side, and Bishop Gore endorses this judgment. Is it possible to deny it? Is it possible to deny that the teaching of the Church on Property has been wholly different from the teaching of the prophets and our Lord and our Fathers in Christendom? As Dr. Scott Holland forcibly says, it is not a secret affair between God and the individual how he administers his goods. The community can thus require of him whatever it needs in order to justify its own administration of its resources before the bar of God.

This is a book by men of various Churches and parties, and it ought to be read and pondered by every serious thinker in view of the terrific struggle between labour and capital which is now impending. Men of good will, and especially Christians, *must* look at wealth and profits in a more human and responsible light.

III.

THE ORDER OF OUR GOING.

(*Published June* 18*th*, 1914.)

WHAT is the first duty of the Church? Is it to preach the Gospel of the Christian redemption or to criticise and alter the present social order?

Till recently it was assumed by the vast majority of Christians that there was no doubt of the answer to this question. Preach, it was said, regeneration, change the hearts of men, and all will in the end come right. There are still many who take that view, and who resent with irritation every movement of the Church towards reform and redress. There are others who contend that till the Church has righted the wrongs that shame her, all preaching of Christianity must be vain.

We maintain against both that it is the duty of the Church to preach the gospel of the divine love and mercy, and along with it and simultaneously the Gospel of a better order. Nay, we will go further, and say that the line must not be drawn too sharply, that a full Gospel must satisfy the famine for righteousness and the hunger for the long-deferred justice of God. To this faith we believe the Church is coming, and it is another proof of the difference Christ is making. We know that the acquiescence is in many cases forced from men whose sympathies are as horny as a day labourer's hand. They have no love of change, but they are beginning to recognise the pent-up forces that are surging and boiling under their feet.

I.

We must preach redemption, and that more passionately than ever.

Christians cannot be satisfied by the mere attainment of material decencies. They must separate themselves from the blatant materialism of so many social reformers. They must steadily dwell on the two great assumptions on which the teaching of Christ is based, the assumptions that find place in the Sermon on the Mount. These are that man is immortal, and that man is sinful. He is immortal, for the Master began by teaching that on the other side of death He would sit on the Throne of Judgment. Man is sinful, even though there linger in all human hearts some traces of God's image. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"

If men are not immortal, the whole scale of values is completely altered. Not that the demand for justice would

cease. We have a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and such a society with men and women included under the term "animals" might conceivably take the place of the Christian Church. At all events, if it did not, there can be nothing higher in its room. Life might be prolonged for a few years, but it would cease in the hopelessness of a beast's grave.

"Show me," said one, "a word of Christ in which man is declared immortal!" "Show me," said Dr. Parker, in reply, "one saying of Christ in which He speaks to men as less than immortal." Once let the faith in immortality die, once let the man sink from an immortal being into an ephemeris of clay, and the future becomes hopeless. The love of man is the love of one for whom Christ died. Before man there is the prospect of an endless existence in blessedness. The great and sacred loves of life, often so ruthlessly inter-

rupted, will be resumed again. Those who have suffered in the flesh will live and be glad in the spirit. Take away this faith, and what energy of hope will remain? It is true that some results may be achieved, that war may be abolished, that disease may be mitigated, that poverty in its sharpest form may be rooted out. This is possible, but it is by no means sure. Even so, allowing the highest state of earthly happiness that can be imagined, the facts of life are unchangeable. As Mr. Balfour says in a noble passage: "Though this be so, yet the sense of misery unrelieved, of wrongs unredressed, of griefs beyond remedy of failure, without hope, of physical pain so acute that it seems the one overmastering reality in a world of shadows, of mental depression so deadly that it welcomes physical pain itself as a relief—these and all the crookednesses and injustices of a crooked and unjust world may well overload our spirits and

shatter the springs of our energies, for to this world only we must restrict our case. For thus restricted the problem is hopeless." Those who would tell us that we are not immortal also tell us that we have no God. Do they suppose that the satisfaction of earthly cravings will make up for the loss? Is there anything in material improvement that will slake the thirst of men for everlasting life?

There is also the fact of sin. No theory of reform is of any value which forgets the "something that infects the world." As it is, much of what is most grievous in our present social system must be traced directly to man's transgression of divine laws. It is hardly too much to say that if humanity lived in the obedience of Christ almost any social order would bring happiness and peace. But the evil heart of man needs cleansing and salvation. There is no hope for us, save as we try for the implanting of a new principle for driving

home the fascination of a new ideal. New instincts must be elicited by a new power. It is a foolish optimism which imagines that good houses and good wages would bring about content. The error of optimism is not so much that it anticipates too confidently the coming of change ; it is that it estimates too highly the effect of change. How often it has happened in our social history that great measures have been carried after fierce and weary fights. Everything was hoped from them, but little came, and the leaders of the battle were disillusioned. The rosy glow of the beginning faded in a dull mist. So it must always be if we forget that life is a discipline everywhere, and in all its parts, and that without the succours of grace no soul can achieve a true triumph over the ills of time.

Mr. H. G. Wells, in a passage quoted in Professor Clow's very able book, "Christ in the Social Order," declares :

"I recognise quite clearly that with people just as they are, with their prejudices, ignorances, misapprehensions, their unchecked vanities, greeds and jealousies, their crude and misconstrued instincts, their irrational traditions, no Socialist state can exist, no better state can exist than the one you have now with all its squalor and cruelty."

II.

But it does not follow that we are to go on preaching till the world is converted, and leave social conditions to remain as they are. We are well aware that many mighty preachers of the Cross have been content to deliver their Gospel, and if they did anything besides, it was an attempt to palliate the miseries of society. Of these Mr. Spurgeon was an eminent type. His philanthropy was as keen as his evangelical passion, and he sought successfully to save the destitute orphans and train

them for a Christian life. In this he had great success, but, after all, he could only lighten a very little the burdens of the poor. Though he did not on occasion refrain from expressing his views on politics, he shrank with an unfeigned reluctance from work of that kind. In Edinburgh religious activities have been as constant and as successful as in any part of the world. For the most part, however, these activities have been missionary or confirming. We do not call the splendid work of Dr. Guthrie in his Ragged Schools anything but philanthropic. It did not signify any assault on the outward conditions of life. The result is that even now in Edinburgh it is impossible to visit certain streets without a kind of stupor of the mind. Many religious societies are at work in the slums, and we gladly acknowledge that the slums are not what they were. But they are still there to excite the horror and the wonder of all who gaze

upon them. Happily, some of the great leaders of evangelicalism have been of another mind. We have refreshed ourselves by reading again the social programme of Dr. Begg. Dr. Begg maintained through all his life a rigid and unbending orthodoxy. None was truer to the old Church traditions of Scotland than he was. On many points he might even have been justly described as narrow, but he had a great and pitiful heart. He was far in advance of most among his fellows in seeing the need of radical change. In 1850 he formulated what he called his charter, consisting of these eight points: (1) Improvement of the quantity and quality of education; (2) Suppression of drunkenness; (3) Better dwellings for working people and the poor; (4) Public washing-houses and bleaching greens; (5) Reform of the land laws; (6) Simplification of the transference of the land; (7) Better treatment of crime and

pauperism; (8) Greater justice to Scotland in Parliament. When the state of things in his day is looked into, it will be seen that Dr. Begg was in advance of his time, and a pioneer of our own.

It is well to remember that mere changes of environment will not regenerate. Dr. Clow justly says: "The latest example of this is to be found in the recent volume, 'Social Environment and Moral Progress,' by that distinguished scientific man, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, in which he treats the character as though it were a natural feature, and although he denies a materialistic theory of the universe, he writes as though moral character were the result entirely of the action of external forces on our human nature." This is true, and it is well that it should be said. But, as another great evangelical, Lord Shaftesbury, saw more clearly than any man of his time, there

are things which cannot go on. We count it a most hopeful sign that the Church in all her branches has practically adopted the doctrine of a living wage. We know that this cannot be carried through without a profound modification of our complex civilised life—more radical, perhaps, than many imagined. It must come nevertheless. We must have an end of sweating. We must give the children their chance. We must revolutionise the land laws. We must destroy the slums. All these points are coming to be part of the Christian creed. Dr. Clow seems to say that whenever a social question passes into the hands of Parliament Christian ministers should stand aside and do nothing. We can draw no such distinction. The Church as a church will be compelled to deal with those questions, and see that they receive answers in accordance with the mind of Christ. We rejoice to find in

so many an habitual and very commanding determination to work in this cause.

III.

There are other questions to be considered. We have to seek the practical means by which this mass of misery is to be reduced. Is the wrong to be put right by the conversion of individuals, or by the voluntary surrender of the rich, or by legislation, or by all these? Will a place for charity remain after justice has been satisfied? These questions must be faced frankly and without fear. We who believe in Christ may possess our souls in tranquil faith and hope. Christ will have the last word, and the last word is a word of mercy and a word of judgment.

IV.

CHRISTIAN LEGISLATION.

(*Published June 25th*, 1914.)

THE cry of the days and years is for justice, and to that cry no Christian can be indifferent. For justice is the bed-rock on which Christianity rests. Mr. Gladstone once said that the enthusiasm for pure justice is the rarest of all enthusiasms, because it cannot deck itself in varied colours. But the sanctuary of pure justice, frequented or unfrequented, is ever a holy of holies.

The present problem of the Churches at this time is how to attain this righteousness of God's kingdom. There are many ways. There is the old and everlasting way of charity. There is the way of individual sacrifice—of giving all our goods. There is the preaching of

God's Word. There is the way of legislation. It is this last way that we consider now. Christians must bethink themselves what measures are just, and put them into operation. They should do so out of free willingness, and not in a sullen surrender to force. This they can do only if a new conception of the mind of Christ breaks into their lives.

I.

We are of those who believe that, apart from Christ and Christianity, no true and enduring rectification of the social order can take place. The great truths that will renew our lives were given us in principle when the Word became Incarnate. We have no minute details, no systematic legislation, but we have those principles towards which we stretch out and climb up—the divine thoughts and counsels of Jesus—the thoughts that are higher than our

thoughts, and the ways that are higher than our ways.

What the goal will be we cannot yet tell. We cannot completely forecast the fair order of God's holy will while we are in the land of the sinning and the dying. What we do know is that the new order will not come in a sure and grand progress. There will be blunders, errors, disappointments without number. We are to look for times when progress is slackened, checked, stopped ; for times of reaction and dismay. But whatever may happen we may be certain that peace and truth will come only from the haunting of men's minds by Christ, that is, from an act of supreme grace. It will not come by the voluntary upheaving and resolution of mortal minds and wills. All we can see in our own little lives is some advance towards the consummation. We have to do the work of building the new society with hands that will soon be folded—never to be unfolded again.

Also the work cannot be done perfectly until human nature undergoes a change which is certainly not at hand. But however slow and difficult progress may be, the true Leader is with us to the end of the troubled ages. We shall never see the glory fading from the face of Jesus Christ.

II.

In order to understand the revolutionary change which has taken place in men's minds within a comparatively brief period we turn to last century. In a singularly able and penetrating introduction to Charles Dickens's book, "Hard Times," Mr. Bernard Shaw has put the facts so well that we content ourselves for the most part with quoting and paraphrasing his words. "Hard Times" is a gloomy book and not a general favourite, and was coldly received at first. The general opinion was probably reflected by Macaulay,

who wrote in his journal: "I read Dickens's 'Hard Times.' One excessively touching, heart-breaking passage, and the rest sullen socialism. The evils which he attacks he caricatures grossly, and with little humour." Ruskin wrote more wisely. He said: "The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truths with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens's caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true. I wish that he could think it right to limit his brilliant exaggeration to works written only for public amusement; and when he takes up a subject of high national importance, such as that which he handled in 'Hard Times,' that he would use severer and more accurate analysis. The usefulness of that work

(to my mind, in several respects, the greatest he has written) is with many persons seriously diminished because Mr. Bounderby is a dramatic monster, instead of a characteristic example of a worldly master; and Stephen Blackpool a dramatic perfection instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman. But let us not lose sight of Dickens's wit and insight because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially 'Hard Times,' should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told."

But this wise word went for little in a day when the average critic viewed such books as a satire of political economy, and asked the author whether the law of gravitation itself did not frequently offend benevolent feeling.

Now for Mr. Shaw. He notes that the book was published in 1854, about the middle of the nineteenth century. The conversions of the nineteenth century in his view were not convictions of individual, but of social, sin. "The first half of the nineteenth century considered itself the greatest of all the centuries. The second discovered that it was the wickedest of all the centuries. The first half despised and pitied the Middle Ages as barbarous, cruel, superstitious, ignorant. The second half saw no hope for mankind except in the recovery of the faith, the art, the humanity of the Middle Ages. In Macaulay's 'History of England' the world is so happy, so progressive, so firmly set in the right

path, that the author cannot mention even the National Debt without proclaiming that the deeper the country goes into debt the more it prospers. In Morris's 'News from Nowhere' there is nothing left of all the institutions that Macaulay glorified except an old building, so ugly that it is used only as a manure market, that was once the British House of Parliament." Allowing for paradox, Mr. Shaw is very nearly right. What we see in the book is that Dickens at the turn of the half century saw with eyes newly opened and conscience newly stricken the real state of England. In "Bleak House" he knew nothing of the industrial revolution. He chafed over the delays and robberies of the Court of Chancery. He scoffed at our party system. He was aware, it is true, of the slums, and in particular the now vanished slum between Drury-lane and Catherine-street which he calls Tom All Alone's. But he traces the evil, as Mr.

Shaw says, to individual delinquencies, local plague-spots, negligent authorities. There is a complete change in "Hard Times." The scene is laid in Hanley, and the town is not a patch of slum in a fine city which may be cleared away. The furnaces are busy and money is being made, and the town is dirty and black and full of factory operators toiling miserably and incessantly for men like Mr. Bounderby. Dickens was up against our civilisation. It was not merely slums that had to be demolished and abolished and rooted up and made for ever impossible. Our entire social system had to be dealt with in the same way. The book is in a line with the latter-day pamphlets of Carlyle, and the tracts of sociological novels of Kingsley and his allies. They held more or less strongly that the remedy for the condition of the civilised world is far beyond the means of individual righteousness,

To Dickens society, for the time at least, presented itself as divided into oppressors and victims, neither of whom could extricate themselves from their huge machinery which drove them remorselessly on.

But the main point on which we wish to dwell is that so far as one can see it never dawned on the mind of Dickens that the working classes might or should take their fate into their own hands. We may be very certain that he would have repudiated with passion the notion that they should do such a thing. His prophetic insight, great as it was in some ways, never showed him that the workers might combine and fight together. He knew of trade unions, and he has described in Slackbridge the trade union organiser. He saw the element of humbug in him very clearly, but he would have been the first to admit that the same element is traceable in all the parties. He knew little of the

factory populations and the purely industrial towns. So he expressly said in this book that the workers were wrong to organise themselves in trade unions, and in this, as Mr. Shaw says well, he turned his back frankly on Democracy and adopted the idealised Toryism of Carlyle and Ruskin, in which the aristocracy are the masters and superiors of the people, and also the servants of the people and of God. No characterisation can be more just than this. "Now, perhaps," said Mr. Bounderby, "you will let the gentleman know how you would set this muddle (as you are so fond of calling it) to rights."

"'I donno, sir, I canna be expecten to't. 'Tis not me as should be looken to for that, sir. 'Tis they as is put ower me, and ower aw the rest of us. What do they tak upon themseln, sir, if not to do it?'"

Dickens stuck to this for the rest of

his life. He made his appeal to the governing classes. He entreated them ; he warned them ; he used his resources of reproach, invective, sarcasm and ridicule to flog them into taking in hand those evils which the system under which they flourish made inevitable. But he never appealed to the working classes to use their power, and he discouraged and disbelieved in the beginnings of association.

III.

For long the democracy seemed unaware of their power. All men knew that they could do anything they pleased. All the great cities—London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow—have been for more than a generation absolutely and permanently in the workers' hands. We are far enough, apparently, from the time when workers will range themselves in a unity, but we see already that the great

majority are determined that the legislation of the future shall be shaped by them, and shall make for their bettering. Partly through this fact, and partly, as we rejoice to think, from the birth of the new social conscience, both the great political parties are agreed that their business in the future will mainly be the condition of the people. When certain measures are out of the way Parliament will be called upon to consider the social question, and it will be the only question in home politics that will excite general interest. The result will certainly be a profound modification of our party system. We are not writing as political partisans, but as Christian believers. As such we are convinced that the great problems of society can only be satisfactorily solved by the combination of Christian men. It will be disastrous beyond measure if we are to have for the future a war between the Haves and the

Have-nots, with the old parties bidding desperately and vainly against one another. Happily the sense of justice is strong, both in the rich and in the poor. If it is appealed to we may escape great calamities, for it is not possible by the forcible redistribution of property to heal the ills. Nor are the workers by any means infallible. St. Paul wrote (we quote Dr. Moffatt's translation): "Brother," we charge you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to shun any brother who is loafing, for you know quite well how to treat us. We did not loaf in your midst; we did not take free meals from anyone." Also, there are economic laws which cannot be defied with impunity.

There is, however, as we have pointed out, a large agreement. We are all coming round to the principle of the living wage. The application of the principle will involve more than most people imagine. The way to this

—and it is the only way—is by legislation. How are Christian men to treat the new social legislation which will diminish their incomes? Are they simply to fight hard against it, yielding in the last resort an angry submission to physical force?

There is a better way. It is their business to help in framing the legislation. They are able to see elements in the problem which workers may fail to discern. Let them in the next place accept with cheerfulness any diminution of profits and income by which the poor will really be better and life made possible and hopeful. We think it was the late Archbishop Magee who maintained that taxes could never possibly be paid willingly, because they were compulsory. We believe that this is untrue. A good citizen should gladly comply with the demands of the State where the State is on the whole just and honest. If a foreign army landed in

this country the Government would ask us for great sacrifices, and they would be most willingly accorded. The old spirit would revive when men sacrificed for a cause jewels and land and life. And we are convinced that there are multitudes of Christian people in all Churches and in all parties who if they were sure that the loss on their own incomes were made good by the increased happiness of the people would most joyfully make the surrender.

If there be a willing sacrifice, and none other counts, we may find that sacrifice is a calling and has bred in us a wisdom higher than the wisdom of the world. Said the mystic, "We never know what God is till we have given up something for Him."

V

THE MILLENNIUM AND THE JOHN-MILL-ENNIUM.

Published July 2nd, 1914.

If we are not mistaken, the word "John-Mill-ennium" was invented by Fitzjames Stephen. We use it as meaning a materialistic golden age. The once formidable power of John Stuart Mill has passed away, and those who read him now are apt to agree with Carlyle, and to call him thin, cold and sawdustish. He had however the eminent merit of clearness. He shrank from no labour in the development of his thoughts. Though hardly successful as a Member of Parliament, he seems, as we read him now, very strong when he deals with reforms which are ready to be accomplished, or which might be accomplished.

Mill's Utopia was modestly conceived. He was deeply troubled by the widening breach between those who toil and those who live on the produce of former toil. He hoped the day would come when the labourer would cease to be a mere instrument in the work of production, having no interest in the work itself, and become in some sort a partner in it. Thus would be harmonised the rights of industry and those of property. He emphatically insisted that justice must come before kindness, and that kindness was practically useless so long as injustice was persevered in. To this subject we shall devote a separate article. What Mill was most sure of was that the poor had come out of the leading-strings, and could not any longer be governed and treated like children. They would find dependence more and more intolerable, and they would ask the determination of their own lives. He predicted that in many cases they would demand the interven-

tion of the legislature in their affairs, and the regulation by law of various things which concerned themselves, "often under very mistaken ideas of their own interest."

To this we may add that Mill, in a vague way, allowed some place for religion in his Utopia. He wrote in a letter of 1868 that what was now wanted was "a union among all those men and women who are deeply impressed with the fundamental essence of religion in so far as religion affects this world." He added: "I need scarcely point out that the special characteristic (of Christianity) as opposed to most religions is that it insists that religion does affect this world, making charity to our fellow-creatures and good actions the criterion of a good man. Now this is also the fundamental doctrine of those who are called Atheists, as well as those whose religious opinions are founded on individual convictions, and are not therefore altogether in

accordance with any of the sects." It will be seen that beyond materialism—beyond what man could accomplish for himself—Mill did not go.

Since then we have had many Utopias, and the last comes from Mr. H. G. Wells, in a book "The World Set Free." It is characteristic of these prophets that they dream of a time when pain shall be the recollection of the historian, when science has done its perfect work, and man is released from the great whip of hunger. We are so far in full sympathy. We believe that much of the misery of man may be prevented, or at least assuaged. We maintain that the poor, and especially the young, should be released from circumstances that inevitably tempt and taint. We believe that it is the duty of Christians so to order the conditions of society that everyone shall have a chance of living the life of faith in this world and the life of vision in the next. To that extent we are

Utopians, but we hold that there are and must be in this life evils from which we shall not be parted till we pass beyond it. No matter how complete the triumph of justice may be it will not free us from the unfulfilled longing, the unsatisfied hunger, the passionate regrets that keep gnawing at the heart. Moreover, we believe that we shall fail even of a partial righteousness and happiness without supernatural aid. What we need is a fresh spring of life, which can only come from the divine holiness and love. Still, we are born in pain and we die in pain, and have to plan and strive and control ourselves if we are not to live in pain. It is not the will of God that there should be so much of life spent in pain, and those who strive for its abatement are servants of the Master.

I.

It may be worth while to recall some of the Utopian visions that from time

to time have been given to the world. In the early seventies they were very frequent, and elderly readers will recall such books as "Erewhon" and "The Coming Race." These reconstructions or anticipations of the future were no doubt caused by the happenings in Germany and France. Germany suddenly leapt to the lead. The Communists in France collapsed. Europe seemed to be thrown into the crucible, and men began to think that social changes would be on the same scale as physical and scientific changes. Most of these books were materialistic, but not all. They gave hopes of the condition of man being improved by scientific discoveries, but it was characteristic of them that they had little hope of any very marked moral improvement. They all looked forward to an astounding multiplication of machinery, and to the perfecting of destructive weapons. Some talked about ballooning and telegraphy,

others of the development of the torpedo power, and others of a mighty agency to be discovered by using and storing animal magnetism. Nearly all expected the cessation of war, not because passion had subsided, but because the forces engaged in the struggle would be too awful for evocation. Thus a prudent passiveness would be the characteristic of the final society without strife or fame or ambition. Society is tamed because of the final and fatal penalty it imposes upon war. For the rest the tendency is to elevate the position of women and children. Men are dominated by a cold reason, and the more actively loving nature of women gives them an ascendancy. One Dutch writer looked forward to the most absurd assertions of the rights of infants and the triumph of the party which is to demand a vote for every baby even before it can speak. The author of "The Coming Race" was almost sing-

ular among these writers in representing his philosophers as worshipping the supreme intelligence and believing absolutely in a future state. He depicts for us a society where no one either wishes to live or fears to die.

There is rather more colour in Samuel Butler's "Erewhon." The book is a bitter satire on Christianity. The gospel of the author is that, while sins and vices are misfortunes to be pitied and sympathised with the want of health is a crime to be seriously punished by the law. Churches are described as "musical banks," where the superstitious hear music and receive a kind of sacred currency not used in real life. Butler did not believe in the higher creeds, in ethics, or religion, or philosophy. In fact, he taught their hollowness, and if he had any counsel for his readers it was that they should estimate rightly the limited powers of their understanding and take their notions of what is best

from the wisest opinion round them. In common with the rest he was essentially materialist, and profoundly sceptical as to the authority of moral law and the possibility of moral progress.

Mr. Wells's book is puzzling, and abounds in statements like this : "In the year 1955 the suicide rate for the United States of America quadrupled any previous record." We gather that war is brought to an end in the usual way, or perhaps we should say by atomic bombs which usher in a monstrous phase of destruction. Power after Power about the armed globe goes to war in a delirium of panic, in order to use the bombs first. After a period of unexampled destruction, the social possibilities of the atomic energy begin to appear. It is decided to "nail down Easter" on a new calendar. The deliverer and ruler emerges in a Russian named Karenin, who was a congenital cripple. "His body was bent so that

he walked with difficulty, suffered much pain as he grew older, and had at last to undergo two operations. The second killed him." Before his second operation Karenin discourses copiously. We learn that poets live to eighty-five, and sex is apparently to be abolished. Men and women have to become human beings, and research is to yield great harvests in psychology and physiology. Sleep is to be practically made an end of. We are to be satisfied with an hour or so of slumber, and rise refreshed again. Karenin's last words were: "Old Sun, I gather myself together out of the pools of the individual that have held me dispersed so long. I gather my billion thoughts into science and my million wills into a common purpose. Well may you slink down behind the mountains from me; well may you cower . . ." But the Old Sun did not cower, neither do we. Mr. Wells, it will be noted, cannot manage his new society

until he has contrived to "nail down Easter."

II.

We may look on all this as partly ridiculous and partly profane. In any case we know what man needs and what Christianity supplies. We affirm that there is no prospect of happiness or stability in a purely secular society. Man must depend upon God. Man must have faith in a sure, helping, interfering, practical love—a love which not only ensures the consummation of blessedness and directs the course of the universe, but also studies sorrow in detail, and lightens it, or makes it a discipline for perfect consolation. Before there can be a moral order there must be a lawgiver. This lawgiver must open the way of deliverance from sin. That means forgiveness for the past and strength for the future. Morality must be inspired and vivified by religion. This religion must not only comfort in sorrow, but

strengthen for labour. It is a religion which takes account of man in health and vigour, as well as in weakness and in decay. We repudiate as much as any sceptic the view that religion is only conceivable as a unique solace or a prop in weakness, or a stay in the eddy, or a substance under the hollowness of life. But though religion is not to be monopolised by the miserable, it remains to be their sure relief. We must know that our dead are not lost. We must be sure of being reunited to them, and restored to the old blessedness under the nearer smile of God. We must know that when these mortal years are ended we go to them, and to the Shepherd Who keeps them in his fold. So we too have our Utopia, but it is eternal in the heavens.

III.

We will quote two testimonies to the need of immortality. One is from

Seeley's somewhat painful book on "Natural Religion." When he draws to a close, he begins to doubt whether the known and the natural can suffice for human life:

"No sooner do we try to think so than pessimism raises its head. The more our thoughts widen and deepen, as the universe grows upon us, and we become accustomed to boundless space and time, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own insignificance, the more contemptible become the pettiness, shortness, fragility of the individual life. A moral paralysis creeps upon us. For a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice; we say, What matter if I pass, let me think of others! But the other has become contemptible no less than the self; all human griefs alike seem little worth assuaging, human happiness too paltry at the best to be worth increasing. The whole moral world is reduced to a point, the spiritual city, the goal of all the saints dwindles to the 'least of little stars'; good and evil, right and wrong become infinitesimal, ephemeral matters, while eternity and infinity remain attributes of that only which is outside

the realm of morality. Life becomes more intolerable the more we know and discover, so long as everything widens and deepens except our own duration, and that remains as pitiful as ever. The affections die away in a world where everything great and enduring is cold; they die of their own conscious feebleness and bootlessness. Supernatural Religion met this want by connecting Love and Righteousness with eternity. If it is shaken, how shall its place be supplied? And what would Natural Religion avail then?"

The second is from Mr. Balfour's magnificent address on the Religion of Humanity. He asks what man is if he is not immortal.

"His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and discreditable episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. . . We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our

system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish."

But this world is not one of the meanest of the planets. Neither is the existence of man an accident. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

VI.

"CHARITY NEVER FAILETH"

(*Published July 23rd*, 1914.)

When justice has been attained in the social order, so far as this may be, will there be any longer a place for charity? We answer that the true charity can never fail.

The mediæval theologians used to discuss whether faith and hope would abide for ever. The prevailing opinion seems to have been that faith and hope were tabernacles to be happily taken down one day and to rejoice in their own blessed end. But love is not a tabernacle, but an abiding temple.

I.

This charity which is everlasting is of the nobler sort. Once for all it has been described in St. Paul's glorious chapter. Sir Thomas Browne has defined it: "I

hold not soe narrow a conceit of this vertue as to conceive that to give almes is onelie to be charitable, or thinke a piece of Liberality can comprehend the Totall of Charitie. . . . .There are infirmities not onelie of body but of Soule and fortunes, which doe require the mercifull hand of our abilities. . . . It is no greater Charitie to cloath the Body than to aparell the Nakedness of the Soule." If money doles occur first when charity is mentioned it is a token of degradation. That was not the charity of which St. Paul was thinking, though from that high charity the lower charity should come.

II.

Yet certainly the word charity has been largely applied to the giving of money. Up to very recent times this was the only way almost in which kind hearts could manifest their kindness. The histories of the saints are full of

instances in which they, out of their poverty, succoured the poor and needy. Dora Greenwell tells of two good women whom she knew equally devoted to the poor and miserable, equally indefatigable and liberal. Both were fervent Christians, energetic supporters of missions, deeply interested in all that tends to enlarge the Kingdom of Christ on earth. One had a small independent income, chiefly derived from the poorer quarters of the town, and the other kept a small shop in a humble district. Each condemned the other for excessive liberality. The one could not bring herself to exact her rents, and the other patiently allowed her list of bad debts to increase. "You see," said one to Miss Greenwell, "it is very hard to know what to do in these cases; there are those texts in the Bible warning one not to shut up one's compassion against one's poor brother; in fact there are so many texts." Yes, there are many texts.

Miss Greenwell thought this a good time to say, "And how are your tenants going on, Mrs. T——?" an inquiry which brought to light, besides many lesser defalcations, one individual deficiency amounting to twenty-five pounds!

We have just read, in the Life of the Rev. W. Tiptaft, once a clergyman of the Church of England, and afterwards a minister among the Strict Baptists, that he attached himself particularly to the poor, and they became his chief companions and friends. He had few wants of his own, and possessed a fairly good income, and he kept almost open table for all in whom he could perceive the grace of God. He had a most happy way of giving, and never seemed more himself or better pleased than in doing it. He generally carried his money loose in his waistcoat pocket, and rarely passed a beggar without giving him something. He was continually waylaid by boys and poor people, who

begged of him as they passed by, and rarely in vain. He would never take presents of money or other things; he would return them if sent to him. When he went to preach he would give all his money away, so as to be obliged to borrow to pay for his railway ticket home. He always sent back double what he had borrowed, with directions to give the overplus to the poor friends. He kept up this continual stream of giving by the most rigid economy and self-denial as regarded himself, never wasting a shilling on anything unnecessary. He had a remarkable knowledge of the value of money, and yet seemed to put no value upon it except to give it away. He was extremely careful, yet could not bear to receive, but was always forward to give; careless and indifferent to his own comforts, yet ever desirous to promote the comfort of others.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

We acknowledge that this way of giving has been largely, and perhaps rightly, condemned. But still, and always, the true Christian will find a place in his life for individual acts of generosity. He will search for opportunities, and he will find them. Though it is only so small a thing as to send flowers to the sick, it is something. If we are able to make the way clearer for those who are beginning the difficult journey of life, if we are able to lighten the burden of decaying years, if we can rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with them that weep, we are servants of the Kingdom, and in these things well pleasing to Christ.

III.

Still it must be owned that charity—the word and the thing—have no longer the old romance. Miss Scudder, in her excellent book on "Socialism and Character," puts this very effectively.

She says: "Sweet Charity is with us still—larger, more enterprising than ever. But the joy has died out of her eyes. She no longer dances rose-red beside the Chariot of the Church attendant on Heavenly Wisdom, but treads gingerly, like a modern lady in a hobble skirt, nervous, self-distrustful, conscientious, and a little discouraged. When she relaxes and amuses herself for a moment she regains a trifle of her old charm; but as soon as she settles to serious business and leaves the domestic hearth for a public career there is no more womanly softness about her than about a militant suffragette." We are told now, and we are rightly told, that indiscriminate giving is not wise. Some would go so far as to tell us that we must not give a penny away lest pauperism be increased. We must by no means give to the beggar, because we encourage him to remain a beggar. The fact is that charity has become

scientific. It is organised; it is an affair of expert officials, committee meetings, and investigation. The feet of love and pity that would run swiftly to aid are entangled in red tape. This may be so far inevitable. It may be right that the boards which collect and dispense funds are doing what is necessary. We would not for one moment disparage the laborious, and in many cases, self-denying work of the organisers and the charity agents. Still, it is very plain that the attitude of philanthropy is extremely dangerous. We can all of us see how organised generosity leads in many cases to an unlovely suspicion and self-complacency. The poor are very apt to suspect a mixture of motives on the part of their benefactors. As there is no personal touch between the two, it is easy to suggest that the ingenious devices by which the social revolution is staved off are not disinterested, but very much the reverse. Nor can it be ques-

tioned that the receipt of charity from officials often tends in a very marked way to coarsen and blunt and degrade.

IV.

This is because giving without the giver is not true charity. True charity in all its forms is the expression of kindness, and not the expression of compunction or fear.

We shall need—all of us—a constant and watchful charity in the conflicts that are now upon us. Without charity we shall never be able to bring in a just and permanent order of society. The rich must learn to show charity to the poor, and the poor must learn to show charity to the rich. Much too often the rich have met the claims of the poor with an indignant denial. Much too often they have refused to consider what the life of the very poor really is. They choose not to know of its limitations, its suffering, its bitterness,

its tortures of uncertainty. On the other hand, the poor have often failed to consider what the rich have to say for themselves. They have taken up an attitude of sullen or savage opposition. They forget in how many cases men are born among the privileged. They forget how hard it is to overcome the temptations of wealth. They forget the serious and grave economic questions which have to be faced in every wise project of redress. They forget in how many instances the workers have been reinforced by leaders who are not working men. We can easily give a list of reformers who may rightly be called extreme, who come from homes of luxury and ease. The mere setting of the oppressed against the oppressors will not work out the end that Christ is seeking. In truth, no social order will rest upon firm foundations if it is secured by naked force. Won in that manner it is continually open to challenge, and

it will be challenged by powerful and resolute men. No, there must be a growth of sympathy. Each must strive to consider and understand the other. It is very hard. Yes, indeed, it is very hard to relinquish possessions, and harder still to acquiesce in circumstances which, in their very nature, make for pain and for wrath. Still, in the spirit of charity, and only in the spirit of charity, can the goal be attained. There must be not only legislation carried by majorities; there must be along with this an inward transformation affecting the deep springs of will and love.

V.

But supposing that the difficulties are overcome. Supposing the new order is set up with as little violence as may be. What then? When we have justice shall we any more need charity? We agree that justice must come before charity. This is the divine order. But shall

charity fail? If charity fails the battle has been fought and the victory has been won to no purpose at all. We can conceive a society in which there may be little need of money and few opportunities for money gifts. But the praises of charity have been sung most sweetly, and the exercises of charity wrought most perfectly by those who had neither silver nor gold. While we are on earth sin and suffering will remain. It has been suggested by a great Socialist that there may be more real wickedness in the social state than in that which preceded it. For ourselves, we do not accept the order of Socialism as the final order of the future. We do not know what may be the fashion of that order. We grope and stumble in the darkness toward it not knowing what will befall. What we do know is that the excellence of charity does not lie in pecuniary gifts. What we all need is not merely help in emergencies

but kindness now. We need the love that blesses unawares like sunshine. We do not want to wait till we are dying for tokens of affection. We need affection in the days of our happiness almost as much as in the days of our grief. We need kindness when we are impoverished, as we so often are, in heart and mind. In the great and sifting trials of life nothing but love will help us. When we are bereaved we need comfort from those who have seen the sea of death divided and the ransomed pass over. What need we have of love when we have to face the bitterness of separation! What need we have when our affections are thwarted, when we have to encounter the blinding disappointments of existence! What will it avail us to live in a community where everyone has his rights and insists upon his rights? No; if that came to pass we should gladly go back to any of the orders that

are dead, and seek to bear their burdens if we may have their consolation. Our hope is that when social barriers are broken down, when life is less anxious and less poisoned, there will be an outrush of heart to heart. Even as it is, the truest pleasures of life are to be found in love, in affectionate human interests, in large sympathies, in giving and receiving. If charity fails, then the new order has essentially failed, no matter how nearly it has approached justice.

VI.

And this charity must go with us into the next world. For heaven is the world of love. The expression of love is not sacrifice but love, and that will come to pass. But even there we shall never be suffered to forget that the high path by which the redeemed attain the city of their solemnities is the path of sacrifice. For the very depths of the sanctities of heaven are lighted by a Lamb as It had been slain.

PRINTED BY
WYMAN & SONS, LTD.,
FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.

THE ROUND OF THE CLOCK

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

With Illustrations by GEORGE MORROW.

Third Edition. Crown 8vo. Cloth. **6/-**

"The fruit of an astonishing harvest of knowledge."—*The Times.* "The book is no jeremiad on the futility of effort, the unfairness of fate, or the certainty of death. On the contrary, it is a bracing and joyous call to duty."—*Daily Chronicle.* "We like this book because of its shrewd literary and social judgments and its mellow optimism."—*Standard.* "Its every page reflects the cheerful spirit of that witty sage, Oliver Wendell Holmes."—*Scotsman.*

THE PROBLEM OF EDWIN DROOD

Third Thousand. Crown 8vo. Cloth. **3/6** net.

"Solves the mystery of forty years."—*Arthur Waugh.* "The Drood case is, I think, ended. It has reached a final Court of Appeal and a verdict has been delivered."—*J. Cuming Walters.* "I am overwhelmed by the arguments reproduced by Sir William. They have, indeed, converted me."—*Clement K. Shorter* in *The Sphere.* "Not only one of its author's most interesting productions, but also one of the most considerable critical performances of recent years."—*Thomas Seccombe.* "Sir William Robertson Nicoll proves himself a literary detective of no mean capacity."—*The Times.* "A real contribution to the subject. The present reviewer regards it as an absolutely satisfactory strengthening of the best views concerning the two main issues of the story."—*Athenæum.*

IAN MACLAREN

THE LIFE OF
THE REV. JOHN WATSON, D.D.

With Photogravure Frontispiece.

Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. Cloth. **6/-**

"An ideal biography. No one else could have written it. Whilst recognising the lighter qualities of Ian Maclaren, paying full tribute to his ever-bubbling humour, Dr. Robertson Nicoll reaches down to the depths of a character that endeared Dr. Watson through a long succession of years to an overflowing church congregation."—*Sir H. W. Lucy.*

MY FATHER

AN ABERDEENSHIRE MINISTER, 1812–1891.

With Portraits. **Third Edition.** Crown 8vo. Cloth, **2/-**

"We can give no higher praise to Dr. Robertson Nicoll's life of his father than to place it in the same rank with Dr. John Brown's famous sketch of his father in the biography written by Dr. Cairns; both studies are unique in Scottish ecclesiastical biography. . . . As a piece of literary art, Dr. Nicoll's work is perfect."—*Mr. Hector Macpherson* in *The Nation.*

JAMES MACDONELL, JOURNALIST

With Etched Portrait by H. Manesse.

Third and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo.
Cloth. **6/-**

"Dr. Robertson Nicoll does well to bring out a new edition of his 'James Macdonell, Journalist.' It is what it professes to be, the life of a journalist—'perhaps,' he claims, 'the only life of a journalist pure and simple ever written.' The materials are arranged with great skill, and the story is told with that simplicity of style which seems so easy till you try to reproduce it."—*Punch.*

W. G. ELMSLIE, D.D.: A MEMOIR

New and Enlarged Edition. Crown 8vo.
Cloth. **3/6.**

"A perfect picture of the man and his life-work."—*Church Family Newspaper.* "A 'speaking portrait.' . . . It enables the reader to realise the man Elmslie, his achievements, his springs of action, the sunshine of his life, his speech, and almost, it seems, his play of feature."—*Scotsman.* "We have read every word of the new edition of Professor Elmslie: it is so human and so compassable that no man, however busy, will fail to go to the end."—*Expository Times.*

HODDER & STOUGHTON, *PUBLISHERS*, LONDON